

early 1960's. That commitment remains to this day.

Mr. Speaker, I think you will agree with me that we are indeed losing someone special with the retirement of Mr. Robinson. His skill and devotion and love for his work are qualities we would all do well to emulate. I congratulate George H. Robinson on a job well done.

HONORING DOUGLASS W. WILHOIT, JR.

HON. RICHARD W. POMBO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 9, 1995

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding public servant who has recently left distinguished public service in the 11th Congressional District of California. Douglass W. Wilhoit, Jr., of Stockton has personified the highest ideals of openness, honesty and courage as a San Joaquin County supervisor for the past 16 years.

His support as an elected official resulted in re-election every 4 years without opposition, and he has achieved the respect of his fellow supervisors through four terms as chairman of the board of supervisors.

Mr. Wilhoit, who retired at the end of December, was elected for several prestigious assignments while a county supervisor, including the 1994 presidency of the California State Association of Counties. He also was chosen at the State level by three Governors for leadership positions dealing with job training, corrections, and criminal justice.

Mr. Wilhoit assumed leadership positions locally in such areas as criminal justice, youth programs, parks and recreations, aviation, and public works. His community involvement spans a wide range of service, such as the United Way, Boys and Girls Club, American Cancer Society, Rotary International, Boys Scouts, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Prior to his election to the county board, he served the community for 12 years as a Stockton police officer.

Mr. Wilhoit has been recognized through the years with honors as "Who's Who in California," "Outstanding Young Man of America," "Community Leaders of America," and a Paul Harris Rotary Fellowship.

Please join with me in recognizing Douglass W. Wilhoit as a great American who has served his community as the consummate public servant for more than a quarter of a century.

INTRODUCTION OF DISASTER TAX RELIEF LEGISLATION

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 9, 1995

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am proposing legislation that would permit disaster victims to deduct 100 percent of their casualty losses when calculating their Federal personal income taxes.

I first introduced this bill in the last Congress after seeing the destruction caused by the Northridge earthquake and after talking with

hundreds of its victims. I realized then that present tax law is clearly inadequate in disaster of this magnitude. The Tax Code acknowledges that it is appropriate to deduct uninsured property losses, but the deduction doesn't kick in until losses exceed 10 percent of adjusted gross income.

Since this legislation was first introduced, I have received hundreds of phone calls and letters from people who are still reeling from the earthquake. Nearly a year has passed, but victims are still finding it difficult to find the money to repair the damages suffered.

The legislation I am introducing would particularly help middle-class taxpayers who suffer substantial damage, but who earn too much to qualify for Federal grants and face tens of thousands of dollars in repair bills.

The bills would apply only in cases of federally declared disasters. When an emergency is great enough to prompt the President to declare a disaster and to determine that aid from the Federal Government is warranted, then stricken taxpayers surely deserve this break on their Federal income taxes.

The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that this legislation would cost approximately \$22 million annually.

Congress appropriated more than \$8.6 billion to help defray the estimated \$15 to 20 billion cost of the earthquake. The estimated revenue loss to the Treasury is very small compared to the significant middle class tax relief this bill would provide to tens of thousands of taxpayers who have to dip into their savings or go into additional debt to repair their homes.

The bipartisan task force on disasters, appointed by the leadership of the House to recommend improvements in the Nation's disaster strategy recognized the importance of improving the ability of individuals, businesses, and communities to recover from disasters by providing resources needed to rebuild. The task force's report included a recommendation that Congress consider this legislation.

Every dollar taxpayers have to send to Washington is a dollar not spent in their devastated local communities. They could spend that money putting contractors and builders to work, or they could use it in local stores to buy items to replace damaged possessions.

It's both good economic policy and good sense to put every possible dollar to work to help ravaged areas rebound from disaster. I will continue to work very hard to pass this important tax relief legislation.

LEGISLATION TO EXTEND MANDATORY COVERAGE OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL LAW TO JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ATTORNEYS

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 9, 1995

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing legislation to add a new section to the act that would require the Attorney General to call for the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate allegations that Justice Department attorneys engaged in prosecutorial misconduct, corruption, or fraud. I introduced identical legislation in the last Congress.

The independent counsel provisions of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 require the

Attorney General to conduct a preliminary investigation when presented with credible information alleging criminal wrongdoing by high ranking executive branch officials. If the Attorney General finds that further investigation is warranted or makes no finding within 90 days, the act requires the Attorney General to apply to a special division of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the appointment of an independent counsel. The act also gives the Attorney General of the United States broad discretionary authority to seek the appointment of independent counsel with regard to individuals other than high executive branch officials. However, the Attorney General is not required to do so in such cases.

My bill would amend the act to treat allegations of misconduct, corruption or fraud on the part of Justice Department attorneys in the same manner as allegations made against high ranking Cabinet officials. In effect, the amendment would require the Attorney General to follow the procedures of the independent counsel law when presented with specific and credible allegations of criminal wrongdoing on the part of Justice Department attorneys. My goal is to ensure that, when there is credible evidence of criminal wrongdoing in such cases, these cases are aggressively and objectively investigated.

I am very concerned over the growing number of cases in which Justice Department attorneys have been accused of misconduct, corruption or fraud. In several cases I have personally investigated, innocent men fell victim to overzealous or corrupt Federal prosecutors. The Justice Department has a poor record of aggressively and objectively investigating these cases. The only way to uncover all the facts and guarantee that innocent lives are not destroyed, is to have a truly independent counsel appointed to investigate. The American people expect that the Justice Department—more than any other Federal agency—conduct its business with the highest level of ethics and integrity. Unfortunately, there are instances where this is not always the case. It is imperative that the Independent Counsel Act be amended to require that allegations of criminal misconduct on the part of Justice Department attorneys be treated with the same seriousness as allegations made against high ranking cabinet officials.

I hope to work with the members of the Judiciary Committee to have the measure reviewed and approved as soon as possible. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, the text of which is as follows:

H. R. —

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY FOR APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT COUNSEL.

Section 592(c) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking "or" at the end of subparagraph (A), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting "; or", and by adding after subparagraph (B) the following:

"(C) the Attorney General, upon completion of a preliminary examination under this chapter, determines that there are reasonable grounds to believe that—

"(i) attorneys of the Department of Justice have engaged in prosecutorial misconduct, corruption, or fraud, and